

Double figures at last!

## Meetings

The new season started with the usual three excellent summer meetings. Apart from the refreshments, it was good to welcome Gwen's friends from Germany, Roger and Heidi. Gwen, Martyn, Margaret and I formed the team to visit Bridgend in October and were made very welcome. A nice touch was the thank you card. The date on it was April but the had been changed to October - but at least we were expected this year! We have also hosted a visit from our friends in Cardiff. Once again Norman Clowes produced some remarkable material comprising Zeppelin flights to Egypt. There was a brief interruption during this display, when some kids were seen loitering in the car park. This has become a real problem since the police station was closed but I have informed the Civic centre staff. Norman was accompanied by Diane Cannard (with red cross) and Shirley Baker (with Nyasaland). The evening was rounded off once again but a wonderful spread of sandwiches and cakes prepared by the ladies.

The dinner was also a great success. we tried the *Rising Sun* at Rogerstone for the first time. Even with sixteen people ordering different main courses they managed to serve us all at the same time. the food was good, the portions generous and prices were reasonable. It is well worth a visit at lunch-times or in the evening, although you do need to be there very early for Sunday lunch.

Roy and I ran a table at the Federation Autumn Day in Carmarthen. I was particularly pleased with the day because I managed to acquire a collection of ship mail covers from Colin Airey. The venue was very convenient, the weather good and the organisers made us feel very welcome. Ken and Peter also made the long journey west. We can certainly recommend these Autumn events to all members. A few days earlier I had been down in Llanelli displaying some Faroes and Iceland material following an invitation by Brian Cripps.

## Federation Matters

The special meeting on 13 June resulted in a vote to hold the Annual Convention in Port Talbot every year. The Eastern clubs were outvoted by the local clubs at this meeting which was held in Port Talbot. The AGM in Bridgend on 23 October was much more interesting than usual. The morning was given over to displays by individual societies. For Newport, I displayed Danish west Indies and Martyn gave a philatelic tour of Fiji. Norman was third member of our team.. the afternoon saw the AGM proper. There was considerable confusion over voting procedures with the Committee not being clear on the rules. Needless to say there was no movement over the location of the Annual Convention which will be on 23 April 1994. The Committee will be looking into the possibility of arranging an "inter-federation" day with the Three Counties and Bristol Federations. When in Wales, this could be held in Newport or Cardiff. Newport in say September 1997 could be an attractive way to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary. I will keep you posted.

Details are now emerging on the replacement for the BPF. The new ABPS (*Association of British*

*Philatelic Societies*) is being set up. Societies affiliating will pay 50p a member direct to the ABPS and not through their Federation as was previously suggested. A society does not have to be a member of the ABPS to stay in the South Wales Federation. It is not clear what if anything we will each get for our 50p but don't expect too much! Earlier this year we voted as a club to support a 50p a head fee. If any member now feels that this is not a good idea please contact me as soon as possible.

## **Stamp fairs**

Once again Cardiff organised a trip to Stampex and although I could not go, I am aware that it was well supported by Newport members. Cardiff do appreciate our support as it makes the trip possible for them. The regular Chepstow fairs organised by Reg Tovey have settled into a good routine. the most recent one, in November, had some new dealers and new material. The venue is recommended to members and it is the ONLY local fair. The next two fairs in Chepstow are scheduled for 13 February 1994 and 8 May 1994 (both Sundays). Symes fairs in Cardiff and Ann Scott's postcard fairs in Bristol regularly attract large numbers of dealers and Chris Doble's smaller Friday fairs in Cardiff are also recommended.

## **Stamp news**

This has been quite an exciting year for Gwent with two new stamps: the Caerleon Roman button and the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal 33p values. this now makes a total of three stamps for the county. the only other one was in 1971 for the centenary of the Rugby Football Union (the 9p value showed scene from a match in 1987 between Newport and Cambridge University). I have "manufactured" a combination cover showing all three stamps.

The Beatrix Potter booklet in August caused a lot of press interest. Firstly the value of the booklet was £6 but only £5.64 worth of stamps were included. Rather late in the day the Post Office bowed to public pressure and reduced the price, although the cover still shows the price as £6. Secondly only 300,000 copies were produced and the dealers bought large quantities with the consequence that the market price has climbed rapidly. The booklet may still be available at small post offices (there is at least one secret location in Newport where copies were still on sale in november!).

There was also news of a major forgery of the 24p brown first class stamp uncovered by the police earlier this year. I have seen one copy on cover thanks to Margaret. The cover has a boxed cachet "forgery" applied by the post office and postage due of 34p collected (24p postage plus 10p collection charge).

Booklets of self adhesive stamps have now been produced by the British Post Office. These were released before the recent rise in postal rates and contained 20 stamps at 24p. The price is now £5. It is of course not possible to purchase single copies - is this progress or a marketing ploy? The booklets are on sale only at a few selected post offices, including the Newport special stamps counter, and rumours suggest that it may be being withdrawn because of problems over the "gum"

No more space now but a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to everyone.

Remember that there is a raffle at all meetings. Donations of prizes please to Margaret Harding. Excellent refreshments are provided at meetings when there are visitors. This is all due to the hard work of the ladies. Material is always needed for the circuit boxes. If you have blank books please fill them or return them. The next circuit starts in October.

John Perry

Hon Secretary